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ABSTRACT

The impact of government policy initiatives on public-sector further education (FE) and FE lecturers in the United Kingdom was examined through a case study of a small group of full-time creative arts lecturers at a large urban FE college. A qualitative research approach was used. Data were collected through the following methods: participant observation; semistructured, open-ended interviews; literature review; and examination of official college documents, national policy documents, and other relevant documents. It was concluded that government interventions to move the FE sector from a service to a business orientation have increased tensions between FE managers and lecturers over such issues as resourcing, management styles, and practices. The new emphasis on managing FE as a business has caused FE managers to introduce human resource management strategies and formal quality assurance systems that have contributed to the marginalization of a pedagogic orientation at the strategic and operational levels. Most of the FE lecturers had a sophisticated appreciation of the system demands of incorporation, the difficulties/responsibilities of FE senior managers, and the benefits of selected initiatives (appraisal and use of external performance indicators). FE managers would be well advised to eschew managerialist strategies in favor of a strategy of empowerment of their lecturing staff. (Contains 240 references.) (MN)

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